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SENATE BILL 480: FOSTER CARE - CHILD SUPPORT OBLIGATIONS

By Martha Arango

Senate Bill 480 repealed and reenacted, with amendments, Maryland Annotated Code, Family Law, Section 5-525(i). The Bill restricts an individual's ability to be a foster parent to other children until the individual first provides support for his or her own children.

Under current regulations, a foster family must have sufficient income and financial stability to provide reasonable living conditions for their own family group without depending upon the reimbursement for basic foster care. The new law requires the Social Services Administration to adopt regulations that mandate background checks of foster care applicants, who are also biological or adoptive parents, for delinquent child support obligations.

Under this new law, the applicants will be given a certain time period to satisfy any past due child support obligations before any action is taken with respect to the placement of a foster child in the individual's home.

This Bill went into effect on October 1, 1999.